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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

SVE/MC-20

APPROVED JNG 2/24/59

IMT

DATE: February 7, 1959
Time: 4:30-6:30 p.m.
Place: Schaumburg Palace,
Bonn.

SUBJECT: Berlin and Germany

PARTICIPANTS: US
The Secretary
Ambassador Bruce
Mr. Merchant
Mr. Berding
Mr. Hillenbrand
Mr. Tyler
Mr. Klein

Germany
Chancellor Adenauer
For. Min. von Brentano
State Secretary Globke
State Secretary van Scherpenberg
State Secretary von Eckardt
Dep. State Secretary Dittmann
Dr. Ruste
Herr Weber

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The Chancellor thanked the Secretary for coming to see him and said now that the Secretary had been to London and Paris he would like to get his overall impression of the situation.

The Secretary said that in London and Paris the discussions followed two principal lines -- the technical problems to meet the Soviet threat to Berlin, and the possibility of having discussions with the Soviet Union on the broader German problem, including reunification and European Security.

In his talks in London and Paris, the Secretary said he had expressed the view that we could not accept the substitution of the GDR for the Soviet Union in clearing our military traffic to and from Berlin. The French accepted this view. The British did so haltingly. M. Spaak apparently had not been thinking along these lines, but after his talk with the Secretary seemed convinced of the correctness of this view. The Secretary had pointed out that as far as the East Germans were concerned our relationship to them in Berlin was as victors who had won certain rights and it would be intolerable to permit defeated East Germans, with whom we have no treaty relations and do not recognize, to exercise control over our troops who are in Berlin by virtue of rights we won in the war.

The Secretary said it was his view that while we might be prepared to identify our traffic to the East Germans, we would not permit them to stamp our documents or exercise the right of inspection over our traffic. However, if any effort were made to prevent our passage either by destroying bridges, erecting road blocks or using force, that would create a grave situation which

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would justify serious military preparations. In such an event, we might take the matter to the United Nations, but only if we were certain of overwhelming support for our position in the United Nations, and provided that such an approach would not bog down the measures we intended to take.

Insofar as a meeting with the Soviet Union was concerned, the Secretary said he found differences between the British and the French concerning the date for such a meeting. Prime Minister Macmillan was extremely anxious to have such a meeting in advance of May 27 to insure that we would be conferring on that date. The French, however, felt that if the West proposed that such a meeting take place prior to May 27, the Soviets would interpret this as a sign of weakness and assume we were prepared to make concessions to forestall the threatened Soviet measures.

The Secretary said the British and French accepted his compromise proposal that such a meeting take place at a time and place mutually acceptable to the Four Powers. This would force the Soviet Union to share with us the responsibility for setting the date for the meeting and obviate the danger envisaged by the French.

Turning to the question of the substantive matters to be discussed at a meeting with the Soviet Union, the Secretary said it was generally assumed that the subject for such a meeting would be Germany. However, there probably would not be a specific agenda so that all sides would be free to introduce any aspect of the problem. With reference to specific proposals which the West might make, the Secretary said he found general agreement in London and Paris that these should be based on those which we tabled at the November 1955 Conference. These proposals were sound then; they are sound now. The difficulty then was that they were too complicated and never adequately presented. They now needed a new setting, perhaps with a greater emphasis on the aspects of a German peace treaty, and less exclusive concern with the problem of reunification.

The Secretary went on to say there sometimes is a tendency on the part of the Western Powers to minimize or not adequately appraise the achievements obtained in West Germany since the end of the war, particularly under the leadership of Chancellor Adenauer. Actually these achievements have been tremendous. For the first time in history, Germany has genuinely friendly relations with France. Great progress has been made in European military, economic and even to some degree, political integration, i.e., NATO, WEU, Coal and Steel Community, EURATOM, Common Market. These represent immense gains and are precisely what the Soviet Union wants destroyed. It is therefore important not to give the Soviet Union or public opinion the impression that we are prepared to buy reunification at a price requiring the sacrifice of these gains, which would result in leaving Germany alone in Central Europe in a position to play the East against the West. The Secretary added he thought we could and should show at a conference that these gains can be preserved with a reunified Germany without endangering the Soviet Union. In fact, as the United States sees it, this would be one of the principal purposes of our meeting with the Soviet Union.

The Secretary said

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The Secretary said he himself did not expect the Soviet Union to agree to any measures which did not involve as a probable and necessary consequence the collapse of the structure of European integration. But the task of the Western Powers, he said, was to make clear to the world that the Soviet Union was responsible for the failure to reach agreement and that the Western Powers are prepared to pursue a sound and constructive course that carries no threat to the Soviet Union.

The Secretary expressed the hope that the Federal Republic would contribute to that presentation along the lines suggested in the Chancellor's recent message to the Secretary (i.e., establishment of German relations with Poland and Czechoslovakia and a statement on the Oder-Neisse problem) and by expanding de facto relations with the GDR to make the attractive influence of the Federal Republic felt in the Soviet Zone.

The Secretary stressed that although these ideas had been generally accepted by the British, the French and M. Spaak, they were still tentative. He therefore thought it might be useful to hold a Western Foreign Ministers' meeting in Paris, possibly in mid-March, to develop the Western position more concretely. To emphasize Four Power responsibility with the Soviet Union on the solution of the German question, he thought it might be desirable for the Three Foreign Ministers to meet once as such and have this followed by a Four Power Foreign Ministers' meeting, with the Federal Republic participating fully. To prepare for these meetings, the Secretary said he supposed a Four Power Working Group of technical experts would prepare a report for the Ministers to examine.

The Secretary cautioned that there was no reason to expect that the Soviet Union would accept a meeting at the Foreign Ministers' level for the purpose and at the time we are suggesting. There were some indications that the Soviet Union would rather have a meeting at the Heads of Government level. That position may in part reflect the fact that Mr. Gromyko does not have the same authority or discretion as Western Foreign Ministers. But this, he remarked, was only speculative. The Secretary said he expected Mr. Macmillan would probably make soundings on this question while in Moscow, although the Secretary emphasized that the United States had not authorized or encouraged Mr. Macmillan to do so.

The Chancellor expressed his gratitude for the Secretary's frank comments and said he had some observations of his own to make. Recently, he said, the German Ambassador in Moscow had two talks with Soviet Premier Khrushchev and Mikoyan which in themselves were not important. However, they did indicate that thus far there has been no softening in the Soviet position. (He said he would give Ambassador Bruce copies of Ambassador Kroll's reports for the Secretary's use.)

The Chancellor then replied to the Secretary's earlier remark that in formulating the Western position it seemed desirable to follow the basic lines of November 1955 with some emphasis on the peace treaty question. If this were done, the Chancellor observed, the question would inevitably be raised with whom such a treaty would be concluded.

The Chancellor said

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The Chancellor said he fully agreed with the Secretary that reunification should not be bought at the price of freedom and the national and international gains of the last decade. Moreover, he was certain this was the feeling of the overwhelming majority of the German people, including the majority of those who voted for the SPD in 1957.

The Chancellor then made several remarks about the views of George Kennan. He said he was astounded by the unrealistic proposals which Kennan was putting forth and surprised at the amount of public attention they seemed to command. (The Secretary remarked that they seemed to command greater attention in Germany than in the United States.)

The Chancellor then turned to the Secretary's suggestion concerning the possibility of expanding West Germany's de facto relations with the Soviet Zone. On this score, the Chancellor insisted, the Federal Republic had done as much as it could, but there was always the question of the barriers raised by the GDR. The Federal Government, for example, had always given the Evangelical and Catholic Churches in the Soviet Zone its fullest support since they represented the strongest bulwarks against Communism. But now the Churches' position in the Zone had become so precarious it was no longer certain how much they could do. The Federal Government also tried to further personal contacts between the peoples of both parts of Germany, but the East Zone passport and travel regulations were making it impossible even for families to get together.

At this point, the Chancellor turned to the subject of security. He said that in the draft reply to the Soviet note of January 10 worked out by the Working Group in Washington, he noted references to "peace in Europe" and "peace in the world". The two concepts, he said, were inseparable, for there could be no peace in Europe without peace in the world. Unfortunately, however, the myriad regional security plans of the Rapacki type, which were being tossed about in many quarters, created considerable confusion and sight was lost of the more important considerations. The fact of the matter is, the Chancellor said, there can be no peace until there is nuclear disarmament. Therefore, it was essential for the West to make it clear that until disarmament was a distinct possibility, it would do nothing to weaken Germany's ties with the West or upset NATO and European integration. mm
mm

The Chancellor then said he wanted to speak about the Soviet aims and objectives as he saw them. The Soviets, he said, still adhere to their old thesis that Capitalism is doomed and Communism, under Soviet leadership, will dominate the world. The only real obstacle to the Soviet Union's achieving this goal is the United States. Therefore, one had to expect that the Soviets would try to isolate and destroy the United States. The Chancellor brushed aside Khrushchev's claims of Soviet economic achievements as "grossly exaggerated". However, he added, it was his opinion that one of the principal reasons the Soviet Union wanted to undermine European integration and get control of Germany's economic potential was to strengthen its position in its economic war against the United States.

The Chancellor dismissed.

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The Chancellor dismissed talk about Soviet fears of Germany and German rearmament as sheer nonsense. He said both Khrushchev and Mikoyan told him personally that there were only two real powers in the world today -- the Soviet Union and the United States. But as long as the United States was as strong as the Soviet Union in the nuclear field, the Chancellor said he felt there probably would not be an all-out war. However, on the other hand, any indication of a breakdown in Western unity would be certain to encourage the Soviets to follow a more provocative policy. The Chancellor therefore hoped that in the future the Western Powers would do everything possible to present an unshakable united front.

At this point the Chancellor said Foreign Minister Brentano had some remarks to make, which he did along the following lines: He said he was in complete agreement with the Secretary on the nature of the tasks ahead. There was no harm in repeating sound proposals. They merely had to be pulled together, polished and presented in a more comprehensible form for the man in the street. The alleged Soviet initiatives were merely a repetition of unacceptable proposals. The Foreign Minister went on to say that he hoped the Western Powers would include their London disarmament proposal in the package they finally present. *MM*

At this point the Chancellor interjected that he hoped the disarmament negotiations could be resumed soon but preferably "without the cooperation of Mr. Stassen". Brentano then continued. He said as far as the German Government was concerned, there were certain limits in negotiations beyond which it could not be expected to go. He said the Federal Government, for example, could not accept any proposals requiring it to give up its ties with the West. Nor could it be expected to accept the Soviet Union's peace treaty proposals which would give the Soviet Union the right of intervention.

With regard to Berlin, the Foreign Minister wanted to make these observations: the Berlin problem cannot be solved in isolation. It had to be dealt with in a broader context. However, if a conference were arranged to discuss the broader German problem, an interim solution might possibly be found; but any solution to be acceptable would have to protect the basic rights of Berlin. It was admittedly too early to try to envisage how negotiations might develop. But, as the Secretary indicated, it was important to make clear to the Soviet Union that any attempt by it to tamper with Berlin on a unilateral basis would be met by the resistance of the free world.

Returning to the Chancellor's earlier question - with whom a German peace treaty would be signed - the Secretary said it would have to be a reunified Germany.

As far as Soviet policy was concerned, the Secretary remarked that the Chancellor's thesis was generally accepted in the United States. The Secretary said we recognize that the Soviet Union considers the United States its primary enemy and ultimate target. Its purpose is to encircle the United States, picking up one country after another, adding to its economic strength and military capability so that it would ultimately be in a position to strangle us. Therefore, West Germany with its great industrial potential is the great prize

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prize in Europe just as Japan is its target in Asia. It is because the United States realized this that it abandoned its traditional policy and made collective security arrangements with almost fifty countries.

Referring to the Chancellor's recent letter to him, the Secretary said the Chancellor had indicated that he was afraid some people in the United States and the United Kingdom felt that if reunification could be accomplished on Soviet terms, then the struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union could be resolved. This, the Secretary said emphatically, was not the thinking of responsible people in the United States. Recalling his recent testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, the Secretary said the Soviets talk about ending the cold war but they make no concrete proposals. The only proposals they make are calculated to help them win the cold war. And the majority of American public agrees with this view.

The problem, the Secretary said, is not one of reaching agreement with the Soviet Union. That is difficult at this time. Our main problem is to keep the support of free world opinion, by indicating our willingness to do what is decent and fair and demonstrating that the reason the cold war continues is that the Soviets will not make or keep agreements unless these help them win the cold war. The nuclear test talks now going on in Geneva have demonstrated this. The Soviet Union has continually talked about wanting to help humanity by ending nuclear tests and has tried to create the impression that it is willing to accept the principle of controls. But when confronted with concrete proposals, this turned out to be nothing but sham.

The Secretary said he felt the handling of the Geneva meeting on nuclear testing had been sound. The outcome could have been foreseen. However, the Secretary added, it would have been unfortunate from a public opinion point of view to have refused to meet with the Soviet Union. Moreover, by negotiating with them, they have amply demonstrated their bad faith.

There was no question, the Secretary said, but that the West had a strong case to make. The principal job, however, was to marshal the case effectively.

The Chancellor agreed, and remarked that it was too bad NATO had not proved to be a more effective instrument for this purpose. The Secretary then commented the truth was that many governments did not want to say unkind things about the Soviet Union. That, however, was a weakness of which he, the Secretary, could not be accused -- and the Chancellor added nor could he.

The meeting concluded on this note, and it was agreed that the Chancellor and the Secretary would meet again the following morning.

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